I-80 HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE LANE UPDATE • SUMMER 1993

NJDOT Launches I-80 HOV Lane Commuter Campaign

What's a Diamond Express Lane Anyway?

The Diamond Express Lane is a commuter's best friend, according to a 24-month public awareness campaign promoting the I-80 high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane as a regional solution to traffic congestion.

Transportation Commissioner Tom Downs officially announced the name of the I-80 HOV facility as the Diamond Express Lane and unveiled the $2.5 million federally funded campaign to support its use.

"NJDOT has been committed to involving local agencies, the public and the business community in the development of the Diamond Express Lane as a regional transportation solution," Downs said.

"We are continuing that outreach with this campaign, by focusing on the benefits that the Diamond Express Lane brings to the commuters, employers and local governments it was built to serve," he explained.

EXISTING DEMAND

The 10 mile HOV lane, currently under construction between Route 15 in Rockaway Township and I-287 in Parsippany-Troy Hills, will carry buses and vehicles with two or more passengers eastbound during morning rush hour and westbound in the evening rush hour. The lane is scheduled to open in March 1994.

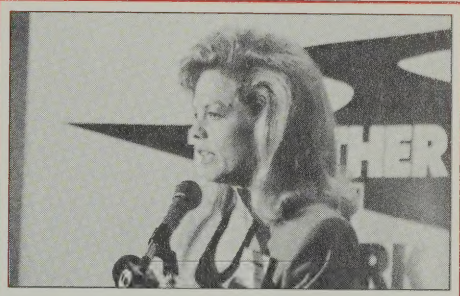
Downs noted that a 1992 NJDOT study found that carpools already exist in 11 percent of the morning rush hour vehicles in the HOV lane corridor. Over 16 percent of the evening rush hour vehicles have two or more passengers.

The formation and use of carpools, vanpools and public transit is among the goals of the campaign, which includes print, radio, television and outdoor advertising, as well as regional newsletters and direct mailings.

A BETTER COMMUTE IS RIDING ON IT

The campaign will focus on how the Diamond Express Lane saves commuters time, reduces vehicle maintenance and gas costs, and alleviates the stress of fighting traffic congestion.

Downs said the campaign will also promote the lane to regional employers and employees as a valuable tool for achieving Employer Trip Reduction goals required of all employers of 100 or more people by the federal Clean Air Act Amendments.



NJDOT Assistant Commissioner Johnson announces ETR campaign.

NJDOT Begins Promotion Of Employer Trip Reduction Program

The New Jersey Department of Transportation has kicked off a two-year campaign called "Get Together To Get To Work" to support a new federally mandated Employer Trip Reduction (ETR) program that will affect how 1.7 million commuters travel to work each day.

Mandated under the 1990 federal Clean Air Act Amendments, the ETR program is designed to reduce the number of cars on the road during the morning rush hour by providing employees with travel options such as carpooling, vanpooling and public transit as well as work-at-home alternatives.

"We need to educate the public about the Clean Air mandate and how we all will benefit from improved air quality and less traffic congestion," said NJDOT Assistant Commissioner Christine Johnson.

COMING HOV IN 1994

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HOV Lanes Approved As Part Of I-287 Widening In Morris, Somerset

Transportation Commissioner Tom Downs has announced that HOV lanes will be established on I-287 as part of a widening project between I-78 and I-80 in Somerset and Morris counties.

Downs said his decision to designate the lanes was based on the recommendation of a special study committee that HOV lanes could ease the daily commute through the I-287 corridor and from the strong support of the region's corporate community.

Work on the widening project is expected to begin next May with some sections ready to open in 1996. The entire 21-mile project could be completed by 1998.

"HOV lanes can save commuters time and money, not to mention the daily stress of battling rush hour traffic," Downs said. "HOV lanes have been successful in similar congested areas and we are confident they can work here once the public fully appreciates the benefits of sharing a ride to work."

The lanes are reserved during the morning and evening rush hours for vehicles carrying two or more people. At all other times, the lanes are available for general use.

The I-287 lanes would tie in with a 10-mile section of HOV lanes previously designated on I-80 between Route15 and I-287 in Parsippany-Troy Hills that will open next March.

REGIONAL INCENTIVE

"Just as we as a society successfully overcame our initial reluctance to recycle garbage, so too will many of us rethink how we commute to work every day. HOV lanes will provide a valuable incentive to leave the car at home and share a ride to work," Downs said.

Studies showed that using the I-287 HOV lane could cut 10 to 15 minutes in commuting time. Up to 1,200 vehicles per hour could be carried in the lanes once fully operational in 1998. Downs noted HOV lanes also offer savings in terms of gas, vehicle maintenance and insurance costs.

The HOV designation for both I-287 and I-80 was studied and recommended by a Steering Committee consisting of public officials, private employers and the Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) of Morris and Somerset counties. The committee concluded in April that HOV lanes would be used by motorists and that they could be cost-effective and enforceable.

TRIP REDUCTION TOOL

Also, the lanes would provide a valuable tool for implementing the Employer Trip Reduction program mandated under the federal Clean Air Act. The program requires employers with 100 or more workers to reduce rush hour traffic by encouraging vanpooling, carpooling, public transit, telecommuting and other options. Nearly 200,000 jobs are located along the I-287 corridor through Morris and Somerset counties.

The I-287 HOV plan calls for the lanes to operate in both directions between Morristown and I-80 during the morning and evening rush hours. Between Morristown and I-78, an HOV lane would be provided northbound during the morning rush hour and southbound for the evening rush hour.

The HOV decision won support from corporate leaders along the I-287 corridor.

"Employees who use our vanpool or ride-share programs, will certainly benefit from this decision," said Robert L. Schauer, AT&T's vice president for corporate affairs. "And as we continue to work on the ways to comply with the Clean Air Act's employer trip reduction requirements, I hope more employees will see that they can save time by teaming up with a co-worker to avoid traffic congestion."

Bellemead Development also endorsed the HOV lanes, said Robert Martie, the firm's vice president and chairman of MC RIDES, the Morris County TMA.

"We feel the traffic and air quality benefits will enhance northern New Jersey as a good place to do business," Martie said.

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Get Together To Get To Work on I-80

Form carpools and vanpools.
For free assistance, call:

1-800-245-POOL

Somerset County destinations:
call RideWise of Raritan Valley, 908-704-1011.
Morris County destinations and information on the I-80 Vanpool Subsidy Program:
call MC RIDES, 201-267-7600.
Essex and Union Counties Destinations
call Transit Plus, 201-491-7600.

Park and Ride

Morris County

Rockaway Townsquare Mall Park & Ride
located on I-80 and Mount Hope Ave., Rockaway Township. NJ TRANSIT bus service is available.

Lakeland Bus Lines Park & Ride
located on East Blackwell Street (Route 513), Rockaway Township. Bus service is available.

Netcong Park & Ride
located on Main St. at the rail station. NJ TRANSIT rail service is available.

Washington Township Park & Ride
located in the median of Route 46 (east of Hackettstown). Lakeland Bus service is available.

Somerset County

Branchburg Park & Ride
located 3 miles south of the Somerville Circle. Express bus service is available to NYC. For permit information: 908-526-1300

Sussex County

Blue Heron Road Park & Ride
located at Blue Heron Road and Route 15. Lakeland Bus service is available.

Sparta Park & Ride
located at the Sparta Township Municipal Building. Lakeland Bus service is available.

For NJ TRANSIT bus routes and schedules, call
(from 6 a.m. to midnight):
In NJ: 800-772-2222;
Out of state: 201-762-5100.

For Lakeland Bus Lines information call **201-366-0600.**